

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2006

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Office of the Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC, 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld,

New Jersey has deployed 70 percent of its National Guard in support of the Global War on Terrorism. In Afghanistan, in Iraq and even as multinational observers in the Sinai, New Jersey National Guard and Reserve have distinguished themselves and brought credit to our state and our nation. That is why we were deeply troubled to learn that the President's Fiscal Year 2007 Budget proposes drastic cuts to the size of the National Guard Force Structure Authorizations (FSAs). In New Jersey one battalion comprised of more than 500 guardsmen and women could be eliminated.

After the terrible destruction of Hurricane Katrina National Guard and Reserve members from across the country, including New Jersey, provided essential rescue and recovery services that could be jeopardized by the proposed cuts to the FSAs.

In October of 2005, Guardsmen and women responded to severe flooding that inundated parts of our state. New Jersey Guardsmen and women provided essential security to nuclear power plants, bridges, tunnels and helped respond to numerous natural disasters. The New Jersey Guard and Reserve cannot afford to reduce their force sizes without risking potentially deadly unintended consequences.

Abroad the National Guard, despite receiving only eight percent of the total Army's budget in 2004, contributed 48 percent of the troops on the ground in combat. With Guardsmen and women serving bravely abroad, now is not the time decrease the FSAs.

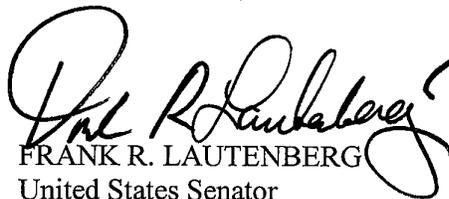
Further, we were distressed to learn that The Adjutants General, the National Guard Bureau, The Army Reserve Force Policy Committee and the Governors were not consulted about this change in force size.

This decision should be revisited immediately, and we strongly recommend that the Force Structure Authorizations remain untouched.

Sincerely,



RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress



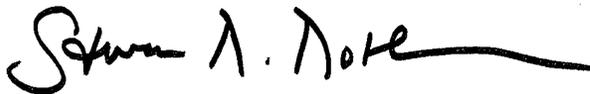
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ
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FRANK PALLONE Jr.
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